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4.

Moving the Statue: Myths of Motherhood in Eavan

Boland, Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture

Nicholas Taylor-Collins

Given that ‘Gender is not a subordinate issue to that of textuality in [Eavan] Boland,’¹ a prominent concern for the poet is the claustrophobic myth of Mother Ireland whose dominant position in the symbolic Irish order appears to constrain the possible iterations of motherhood, in life as in poetry. It therefore makes sense that Boland’s poetry coherently and consistently points to other models for success. Sabina Müller connects Boland’s poems of the pomegranate to the Eleusinian Mysteries, while Molly O’Hagan Hardy establishes that ‘Boland’s work continually refers to her indebtedness to Yeats’. Jody Allen Randolph also cites Sylvia Plath as one of Boland’s inspirations during the late 1970s.² With each critic tacitly accepting Boland’s ‘control of ventriloquism’,³ this short list of authors could easily be extended, and represents the beginning of what Boland herself has called a ‘usable past’: a historical cast of writers and figureheads that can be readily accessed and rewritten at will.⁴

Whilst these influences vary by continent, century and gender, no critic has yet examined Shakespeare as one of Boland’s inspirations. However marginal he may appear on the surface, in this essay I offer Shakespeare as model for a certain aspect of Boland’s liberating poetics: the strategic manipulation of myths of motherhood. In this strategy, daughters are the key to unlocking mothers’ potential. This turns what is a ‘fatal’ strategy that is doomed to failure into what might be called a statuesque one, in which legacies are

rewritten through the process of reanimating static and paralytic myths, by restoring those outside history to the real, lived-in narratives of the past. This takes place across Boland's oeuvre, from her first poems in the 1960s to her latest in the 2010s. For Shakespeare, the animating statuesque strategy is clearly evident in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, particularly as they are in dialogue with a posthumous, mythic construction of Elizabeth I as mother to the English nation.

Nevertheless, Boland's explicit engagement with Shakespeare is brief, and bears little overt interest in mothers and/or daughters. In the early *New Territory* (1967), Boland's 'Shakespeare' adapts the sonnet form, mixing Shakespearean with Petrarchan forms. The sonnet is dedicated to Philip Edwards, Boland's Shakespeare professor at Trinity College Dublin, and addresses Shakespeare himself. 'You wrote because you had to' begin both the first and second quatrains, and the first quatrain ends with 'the plague waiting in the wings'. By the final tercet, the conversational address turns to reverence when 'You made of every quill the fire which men / Primitively lit against the beasts, whose flames / Were agile sentries between them and chaos'.⁵ Given the dedication, it is unclear how much this poem is in true reverence to Shakespeare, or to the professor who introduced Boland to the Bard.⁶ Central to the poem, nonetheless, is the idea that poetry is not a vocation but a living enforced on the individual, owing to financial pressure or 'loneliness'; this art, however, can nevertheless defend against the 'chaos'. The latter is characterised as nature unfurling its power through plague to decimate the population. The poet, in short, is forced to adopt a strategy to mitigate disaster, and that strategy is poetry itself.

In 'The Comic Shakespeare', also from *New Territory*, a firmer Shakespearean sonnet form is employed, and Boland's speaker asks whether the 'false jeopardy' of the comedies was 'Born of brightness', or whether Shakespeare would never have written them had he 'wept in time'.⁷ This sonnet is more conventionally shaped than 'Shakespeare' in terms of rhyme (albeit not metre), but it avoids any commitment to the thematic dedication of love, and nor does it involve the usual shift in tone around the *volta*. This is to say that the sonnet fails as a sonnet except in the barest terms. However, its interest in 'time' by the

poem's end does accord with a key thematic concern of both Shakespeare's sonnets and *The Winter's Tale*, in which time figures prominently. The question posed by Boland's speaker in 'The Comic Shakespeare' invites a range of responses to the phrase 'in time'. In time for what? For whom? Or perhaps time is a metaphysical category, implying that it is limited, curtailed by death, and that Shakespeare is now committed to something other than limited, mortal 'time'? If the latter, then the poem's opening, 'Legend has you', suggests that Shakespeare may have slipped temporal moorings and entered legend or myth instead – a slippage that the speaker resists and wants to change, anchoring Shakespeare back in the 'real' world of lived history.

Rather than seeing in Shakespeare a legendary, poetic forefather whose mere language, themes and style are 'usable', the speaker in these poems wants a real Shakespeare, who lived a real life in the *realpolitik* of early modern England – a Shakespeare who dealt with the pressures of money and death, who strategically avoided bankruptcy (unlike his father), and who may actually have wept in real life. The speaker in these immature poems wants to demythologise the Bard, and wants to examine those moments of *writing as strategy*. Rather than a static symbol, unchanging through the ages, Boland's poetry seeks a living, breathing poet – a statue that moves, we might say.

In her latest collection, *A Woman Without a Country* (2014), the explicit Shakespeare connection becomes allusion with one of the poems titled 'Sea Change', a phrase lifted from the passage in *The Tempest* (I.ii.401) where Ariel describes Alonso's submarine metamorphosis to his son Ferdinand:

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell.

(I.ii.397-403)

In Boland's collection, however, the 'Sea Change' is ironic as the speaker laments the loss of her grandfather in a storm, but simultaneously laments the lack of any inheritance: 'What did he leave me, my grandfather[?] / [...] He built nothing that I could live in.' Where Alonso is lost to Ferdinand, he is also recuperated through his transformation 'Into something rich and strange' (I.ii.402); however, the 'nothing' habitable that is left to Boland's speaker is made worse by the fact that 'I was born in a place, [...] / where every inch of ground / Was a new fever or a field soaked / To its grassy roots with remembered hatreds'. Though the speaker turns to poetry 'To bring land and ocean together, / Saying *water-meadow* to myself for instance, / The distances remained'.⁸ Which is to say that the recuperation of the land through poetry might be impossible in Boland's poetry, forever leaving untouched 'a past that has been left "outside history"'.⁹ Fever – another kind of plague – dominates history more than poetry.

Following 'Sea Change' is the first in a series of Lessons. 'Lesson 1' complains that 'My grandmother lived outside history. And she died there'.¹⁰ Keen readers of Boland's poetry will know that her grandmother died of fever, as detailed on several occasions, most prominently in 'Fever' from 1987's *The Journey*:

My grandmother died in a fever ward,
younger than I am and far from
the sweet chills of a Louth spring –
its sprigged light and its wild flowers –

with five orphan daughters to her name.
Names, shadows, visitations, hints
and a half-sense of half-lives remain.

And nothing else, nothing more unless

I re-construct the soaked-through midnights[.]¹¹

Not unlike the plague that waits in the wings of ‘Shakespeare’, though with far greater, tragic consequences in Boland’s heritage, fever existentially threatens family life. This is, according to ‘Fever’, a particularly damaging disease for mothers, because it was they who cleaned their children’s clothes, and fever ‘is what they tried to shake out of / the crush and dimple of cotton’.¹² What is required to restore and recuperate the grandmother figure is a strategy that can ‘re-construct the soaked-through midnights’, and return the grandmother from family loss to history itself. In other words, the strategy admired in Shakespeare’s writing is the strategy that needs adopting. The statue needs to be brought to life.

The woman or mother as external to history explains why, in Boland’s poems, the mother figure is hard to define and sometimes portrayed as a stultifying and disappointing presence. Indeed, as Allen Randolph explains, for Boland ‘the intersection of poetry with maternity brought a central moment of re-vision, one in which the cultural contradictions between the image of woman and the figure of the poet were exposed’.¹³ Contrastingly, daughters are figured as ‘horizons’ with their future and potential a source of hope. Daughters, that is, become the vessel or medium for Boland’s Shakespeare strategy. This dynamic between mother and daughter leaves Boland’s maternal persona bound into a stagnant present where her potential for having a future (inherent in her as daughter) is behind her, and only her stultified maternity left to her. However, by replaying the logic of Shakespeare’s mothers and daughters in *The Winter’s Tale* and *Pericles*, a paradoxical liberation is enacted: mothers survive their daughters through the latter’s potentiality. This is not merely textual logic, but derives from contemporary early modern English biopolitics, in which Elizabeth I’s legacy was cemented as mother to the nation, partly through the recuperation of her own mother, Anne Boleyn, as a Protestant martyr, and partly through

Elizabeth's posthumous veneration as a paradoxical chaste-mother figure of the English nation.

Like Elizabeth I in England, the Mother Ireland figure persists in modern Ireland – and both of them can be classified as 'symbolic denominators' of Julia Kristeva's '*monumental time*' which 'englobes [...] supranational, sociocultural ensembles within even larger entities'.¹⁴ Through Boland's poetry, that symbol becomes a myth 'best dismantled from within'.¹⁵ Mother Ireland is not rejected, but adapted through a version of a new female biopolitics. The Elizabethan past – a history long declaimed as violent, repressive and colonialist – becomes 'usable' through a strategy perceptible in Shakespeare's late work.

These arguments derive from an appreciation that biopower and biopolitics – the state 'supervision' of 'biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary'¹⁶ – can be exploited advantageously by an individual citizen. Following Foucault's assertions, the female body becomes a tool for the state primarily because it is the source for *future potential*: the womb is the genesis of future populations, and as such every womb is politically conscripted on behalf of the state. Without fertile wombs, any nation, including the Irish nation, is forestalled. In this way, the most personal, intimate, interior sign of womanhood is externalised and made public. If Boland's writing is to turn the mythic structure of Mother Ireland to advantage, then it cannot ignore the public nature of the myth. Moreover, it must re-appropriate the biopolitical as a textual force.

In particular circumstances, however, a certain fatality accompanies the decision to use the tools of the state to advantage the citizen, as Jean Baudrillard explained. For Baudrillard, in a fatal strategy the 'object' – here, primarily the Mother Ireland myth – 'is always taken to be more clever, more cynical, more ingenious than the subject, which it awaits at every turn'. The fatal strategy does not reject the object, but rather dismantles it from the inside, 'to go over to the other side', and concede that subjectivity is inevitably imprisoned.¹⁷ The fatal strategy in Boland's poems is neither to reject Mother Ireland, nor to escape the traps of biopolitics, but to use them to advantage. Just as *The Winter's Tale* and

Pericles end with the promise of marriage, even as it has been shown to be restrictive and damning to women (notably so in the case of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*), so do Boland's poems promote the restricted position of mother as a space from which to reach after liberation. Fatally, it might be said, the existence of motherhood as an entrapping myth continues; but there is a perverse freedom in the particular variety of motherhood embodied by *Pericles'* Thaisa, *The Winter's Tale's* Hermione and Elizabeth I. The strategy that these women (characters) are seen to employ is available to Boland in her own poetics. Critically, in *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione returns to the stage to meet her daughter after she has been posing as a statue: when Shakespeare moves the statue, he restores the mother's agency through her daughter's potential. When Boland moves the statue, she reanimates the histories of motherhood and daughterhood. It is a conservative strategy that neither revolutionises understandings of the under-observed past, nor commits to record in 'false faith [...] a sense of completion to a history which is defined by loss and fracture',¹⁸ but at least – which is not to diminish the feat – it stands sentry against chaos.

Mothers

Though there is a raft of female figures in the Irish imaginary, its constituents are often less correlated to political figures than their male counterparts. There is a long run of important male figures: from Fionn mac Cumhaill to Eamon de Valera, and from Thomas Davis to James Joyce. Each of these men figures on the horizon between myth and reality: historically they existed, yet mythically they have surpassed their historicity, moving from profane time – a limited temporality, characterised by human experience – to sacred time, which is unlimited and characterised by divine presence.¹⁹ A male patrilineage therefore takes hold. Patrick Crotty writes that 'A son's attitude to a father need not be emblematic of his relationship with his inherited culture [...] but in Irish literature it usually is'.²⁰ This is most evident, of course, in Stephen's final prayer to his 'father, old artificer' at the end of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which the young man implores the elder to 'stand me now and ever in good stead'.²¹ The dominant Irish story that brooks literary with political

space, then, is male, and there attends a ‘psychic trauma caused by [this] wholly male-centred, national literary tradition’.²² Literary and cultural criticism has also generally failed to supplant a male with a female line of inheritance, as few critics offer a ‘mother and daughter’ riposte to the tried and tested ‘father and son’ party line. One exception²³ is Declan Kiberd, in whose *Inventing Ireland* the ‘Fathers and Sons’ chapter is matched by a corresponding chapter on ‘Mothers and Daughters’. This opens by outlining the chief problem of interrogating the mother-daughter narrative:

What daughters must do in order to become women is more [...] problematic: killing the mother could hardly be enacted in any recognizably comic mode. Even the more radical thinkers of the modern age defined the revolt of women in terms of the attempt by wives and daughters to break free of the constricting images of the female devised by men, and devised as often by men of national resistance movements as by men of the occupying power.²⁴

It is important to note that Kiberd’s reading of the relationship between mothers and daughters is secured to that of the national independence movement – as part of a drive to invent Ireland. Richard Kearney also notes that in the Irish Republican Brotherhood’s declaration of the Republic of Ireland in 1916, Mother Ireland is addressed as ‘a maternal and mythical personification of the Nation who addresses her children in the name of God and those *dead generations* who have sacrificed themselves for her nationhood’.²⁵

A prime example of this version of Mother Ireland is visible in Padraig Pearse’s 1912 ‘Mise Eire’, in which Ireland is figured as a mother who ‘bore Cuchulainn the brave’ and who had ‘children who sold their mother’. There is little this mother can do about her ‘shame’ and ‘sorrow’, even as she identifies herself with Ireland directly in proclaiming ‘Mise Eire’ (which translates as ‘I am Ireland’).²⁶ Boland boldly wrote her own version of ‘Mise Eire’ in an attempt to respond to this dominant narrative. Whilst Gerardine Meaney argues that ‘Pearse’s refrain of “I am Ireland” became, in Boland’s poem, “I am the woman”’,²⁷ I would

nuance that reading and suggest that Boland's poem proffers instead 'I am the mother'. Through that voice, Boland's attempt to counter Pearse's version nevertheless relies on a mother who refuses identity itself, saying, 'I won't go back to it' – the 'it' being 'a nation displaced' – even though she is the 'woman / [...] in the huddling cold, // holding her half-dead baby to her'.²⁸ Whilst the Mother Ireland in Pearse's lament is noble in her ill-treatment, in Boland's iteration, the mother is 'traduced and erased by history'²⁹ and rejects Ireland wholly, 'voic[ing] a new and abrasive relation to the claims of a nation'.³⁰ Though not the Mother Ireland as described by Kiberd, Boland's national mother still lays claim to the nation, even as she rejects it. However, critics such as Catriona Clutterbuck see in this tactic a destined failure: '[T]he fact that the poem insists that this new language is "a kind of scar" that "heals after a while / into a passable imitation / of what went before", directs us to understand that "Mise Eire" itself wants us to see that such resistance to patriarchy can readily be incorporated within and contribute to patriarchy's terms'.³¹ Clutterbuck is characterising, albeit without label, the fatal strategy I described above. For John Goodby, the poem acknowledges the need for a 'complexly human, rather than demeaningly emblematic' woman figure,³² even if that leaves the male canon unchallenged. Ultimately, it leads to the idea that this Mother Ireland figure can be a symbol for the rejection of nation, rather than a demand for action in its defence, as Pearse's male-desirable Mother Ireland was. Rewriting the Mother Ireland figure represents a chance to disrupt the unchanging passage of the female 'ornaments [...] being handed on from poet to poet'.³³

Allen Randolph argues that Boland's 'Mise Eire' 'opens the raw surfaces of experience of Irish women of history as against the idealized women of Irish poetry and legend'.³⁴ These idealized women fit into a narrative of diminished autonomy and narrow scope which might well be seen as a failure of women's representation, especially given the lowly position afforded to women in Eamon de Valera's 1937 *Bunreacht na hEireann*, the Constitution of the Irish Republic, when women were accorded a political place in the home, and silently amended to mothers as the article in question (Article 41) developed.³⁵ This constitutional object – and I use the word advisedly in this context – continues the myth-making of Mother

Ireland and represents the most concrete biopolitical-textual instruction the state offers. *Bunreacht* becomes, in Foucault's terms, part of 'a whole continual and clamorous legislative activity [...] that [has] made an essentially normalizing power acceptable', and is therefore a prime instance of biopower at work.³⁶

This objectified experience of biopower is noted more concretely by Edna O'Brien when she affirms that to experience Ireland as a woman is to undergo 'that metamorphosis from child to bride'.³⁷ There is only one step further to becoming the embodiment of Mother Ireland. Andrea Bobotis similarly confirms that 'by the late nineteenth century, Mother Ireland and the Mother of God were often connected in literary and cultural representations'.³⁸ In a figure such as Mother Ireland, motherhood is cemented in the symbolic register as part of Ireland's cultural hold over its citizens, with mothers themselves becoming 'static, passive, ornamental figures' in Boland's vocabulary.³⁹

Given the lingering pressure of *Bunreacht*, this is ultimately a question about constitutionally-prescribed motherhood in Ireland and the possibility of freedom when fulfilling that role. Many of the mother figures in Boland's writing appear to fail in that regard. In the 'Domestic Interior' sequence from *Night Feed* (1982), for example, Boland's poetry finally arrives at something called 'The Muse Mother'. However, trying to grasp what the Muse Mother is appears difficult, as the poem 'juxtapose[s] everyday presences with powerful absences'.⁴⁰ The speaker struggles to get hold of her, even struggling to enunciate the word 'mother':

If only I could decline her –
lost noun
out of context,
stray figure of speech –
from this rainy street

again to her roots,

she might teach me
a new language[.]⁴¹

The noun 'mother' is absent from this passage, despite its implied presence. 'Mother' appears ungraspable; it is a noun that the narrator struggles to 'decline', that is, put it through its paces as a noun to be subjectified after its implied accusative performance in 'her'. For the persona, this is indicative of the struggle to get 'to her roots', to discover her past so that she might open up a new tradition, 'a new language'. Instead, she is 'stray' and 'out of context', rather than specifically located. The muse as inspiration is occluded, and so futurity and the becoming mother that the Muse Mother might offer disappears: maternity in this poem is never maternal and does not unite. In the specific modernity in which the mother comes to the fore, Boland's poetry admits failure.

This negativity redoubles that in 'Fever', discussed above. The story of the grandmother is symbolically reduced not to maternity, but rather to a failure of maternity, to leaving orphans. Instead of Mother Ireland, the 'fever' that Shakespeare's strategy (as credited in that early poem) managed to hold at bay dominates. The grandmother is directly opposed to life, futurity and fertility. The 'Names, shadows, visitations, hints' that remain are all symbols of a kind, representations that only approximate the truth of the grandmother's story. As a document of past events, only 're-construct[ion]' remains possible, as Boland has suggested elsewhere: 'Again and again I visit it and reinvent it. But the woman who actually traveled it had no such license. Hers was a real journey. She did not come back.'⁴² The impossibility of celebrating the grandmother's maternity is inextricably correlated with the failure to know history fully. The symbol is not adequate to truth, fever wins out, and the statue stands static.

In much the same way, as Boland makes plain, 'myth is instructed by history'.⁴³ 'History' does not correspond, then, with the past which is a neutral reading of what has happened, and should not discriminate between 'major and minor' events, for nothing 'should be regarded as lost for history'.⁴⁴ These losses, as seen in 'Fever', also plague Boland:

Mother Ireland is a myth that disrupts the full assimilation of an under-written past. Akin to 'history', myth does violence to that past. If there is a fatal strategy at work in Boland's poems, then it must contend with the independent violences of myth and history, and it must accept that the Mother Ireland symbol is outside any individual's control. It becomes a national narrative, tethered to the most public of mothers, the Virgin Mary, and re-deployed in modern Ireland by Maud Gonne's onstage Cathleen ni Houlihan. Personal mothers are not welcome in the mythic narrative of Mother Ireland.

Mothers in Boland's writing thus become problematised. The poetry thrusts them to the fore, but they are bound up with the problem of a national narrative of history which precludes personal narratives of success which do not replicate it. The importance of Irish national narratives translates into the problem with making individual, personal stories public – with making count as part of the national heritage the fevered narratives of individual grandmothers who leave orphans.



As Benedict Anderson argues, modern nations – or at least nations emerging into modernity – are held together by more than geography or racial similarity. Instead 'it is an imagined political community [...] It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members [...] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.⁴⁵ The symbol – the image in the citizens' minds – is important in these modern and emerging-into-modern societies. This is self-evident in the modern Irish case, but it is also visible in early modern England. Two chief maternal symbols from that period merit explanation: the symbolic cult of Elizabeth I as Gloriana, and Shakespeare's dramatic representations of absent mothers, particularly in the late romances.

Elizabeth I was never a biological mother, but she did become a symbolic mother to the emergent English nation. From the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth I was connected to the cult of the Virgin Mary. This took place in the pageants celebrating her coronation, as well as in the re-establishment of the Protestant church in England.⁴⁶ The identification

between the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth developed into a cult of Gloriana, celebrating Elizabeth's devoted chastity. Elizabeth herself propagated the vision of her own chastity as early as her first speech to Parliament in 1563, when she declared that these lines might eventually be inscribed on her tomb:

Here lies interred Elizabeth,
A virgin pure until her death.⁴⁷

Preparing her parliament for the possibility of her never having children, Elizabeth displays astute political nous in being wary of – and giving space to – the symbol of her virginity. As Rachel Trubowitz argues, the emerging and changing roles of women in nurturing their children – and metonymically the nation – were central to England's growing modernity:

Maternal nurture newly occupies a central if highly contested place in the early modern cultural imagination at the precise moment when England undergoes a major conceptual paradigm shift: from the old dynastic body politic, organized by organic bonds of blood, soil, and kinship, to the new, post-dynastic, modern nation, comprised of disembodied, symbolic, and affective relations.⁴⁸

The rise of Protestant Anglicanism, cemented by Elizabeth's Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1558), was coterminous with the changed role of maternity in England. As Trubowitz stresses, what emerged was the 'modern nation' comprising 'symbolic' relations. In this structure, the parallels between Elizabeth's politics and those of the modern Irish nation becomes clearer.

This all begs the question why motherhood, for a chaste and virgin queen like Elizabeth, should be maintained so centrally as the symbol of the early modern English nation. Part of the answer lies, I suggest, in Elizabeth's orphanage. Technically Elizabeth was

not orphaned until she was nearly fourteen in 1547, when Henry VIII died; however, owing to the Second Act of Succession (1536), Elizabeth was deemed illegitimate and bastardised by her father when she was only two years old. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was beheaded a month earlier. For most of Elizabeth's adult life she was without a parent and, moreover, found her own mother universally vilified. Following her execution, Boleyn's importance to the Reformation was downplayed because her enemies hoped to have her 'religious patronage' 'neutralize[d]'.⁴⁹

Anne Boleyn's character was posthumously recuperated late in the sixteenth century as a public symbol of good-natured, private motherhood: her characterisation as an unfaithful wife was reanimated. Even Shakespeare contributes to this recuperation in *King Henry VIII (All is True)* (1612)⁵⁰ in which Anne is a pleasant, mild-mannered woman without overreaching ambition. Henry VIII's initial description of Anne is pleasantly positive, calling her a 'dainty one', 'Sweetheart' and 'Sweet partner' in the dance (II.i.94, 103), and later Anne herself repeatedly tells the Old Lady that she could not brook becoming queen (II.iii.24, 45). Important to each of these late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century instances of recuperation is their relation to history and the past. None is contemporary with Boleyn herself, nor even with Henry VIII. Rather, they emerge during Boleyn's afterlife, either as political strategies to ingratiate the authors with Elizabeth I or with the Protestant elite, or as chronicles recording history in a certain light. Only when Elizabeth is an orphan can Anne as mother be restored from outside history to Protestant myth-making.

The Boleyn-as-martyred-mother symbol is important in order to cement a Protestant England, and to reaffirm Elizabeth's importance, even into the seventeenth century and the Jacobean monarchy. Rather than stagnating, Elizabeth's own cult developed after her death in 1603. John King writes that contrary to its propagation as solely Elizabethan myth, 'An awareness of the anachronistic processes at work in the first history of Elizabeth's reign throws light on these earlier phases of Elizabethan iconography and demonstrates how the entire Gloriana cult was defined by the practicalities of Elizabethan *and Jacobean* politics'.⁵¹

To this end, Maurice Howard has explained how ‘the majority of the surviving three-dimensional images of [Elizabeth] are part of a cult of commemoration that developed in the century and more beyond her death’.⁵² Statues, that is, became a dominant way of remembering and posthumously reliving Elizabeth’s queenship, as her narrative developed into the paradoxical myth of chaste motherhood after her death.

Ideas like these are worked through in *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale*, two plays written in the decade following Elizabeth’s death in 1607 and 1609-10 respectively. In both these late Shakespearean romances, ‘The mythology of power is restructured, around the mother-and-daughter relationship’.⁵³ In the latter, Perdita is orphaned inasmuch as her mother is ‘dead’, and her father has disowned her – the moment when Antigonus leaves her ‘exposed / To loss, and what may follow’ (III.iii.49-50) on a hill in Bohemia. In *Pericles*, Marina is similarly left to a foster family when her father leaves her to Cleon and Dionyza, ‘charg[ing] your charity withal, / Leaving her the infant of your care, / Beseeching you to give her princely training, / That she may be mannered as she was born’ (III.iii.14-17). Without their respective mothers for most of the play, only Hermione’s and Thaisa’s *legacies* remain – not unlike Elizabeth, and just as with Boland’s grandmother and the ‘half-sense and half-names’ that linger.

Long after Hermione’s ‘death’ in *The Winter’s Tale*, Leontes laments that ‘Whilst I remember / Her and her virtues, I cannot forget / My blemishes in them [...] and / [how I] Destroyed the sweet’st companion that e’er man / Bred his hopes out of’ (V.i.6-12). This contrasts with his earlier assertion that ‘She’s an adultress’ and a ‘traitor’ (II.i.88-9). Wilson has identified in Hermione’s accusation of adultery and the belated recuperation of her character a reference to Anne Boleyn.⁵⁴ By contrast, Pericles’ thoughts on Thaisa are of course more positive. Looking at Marina late in the play, he announces that ‘My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one / My daughter might have been’ (V.i.98-9). Indeed, ‘Pericles’ identification of Marina in the final Act’, writes Davies, ‘comes of a legitimate reading of the mother in the daughter’.⁵⁵ In both plays, the ‘late’ mothers are venerated, particularly through the living flesh of their daughters. As daughters without mothers,

Perdita and Marina live with the legacy of their mothers, and are in fact representatives of their mothers. Just as Pericles sees Thaisa in Marina, Leontes sees Hermione in Perdita: 'I thought of [Hermione], / Even in these looks I made [to Perdita]' (V.i.227-8). Two ideas emerge from these narrative similarities: first, that whilst motherhood is significantly lacking in these plays, the symbolic ideal mother is never diminished; second, that the mother posthumously survives in and through her daughter. The living flesh of the daughter signifies to all around the 'gentleness' of her birth, and therefore defers to the gentleness of her parentage.

This compels a rethinking of the hypothesis above regarding Elizabeth's recuperation of Anne Boleyn, or even the Jacobean (and later) reinforcement of the Gloriana cult of Elizabeth I. It is not the mothers' deaths that allow their recuperation as positive symbols of maternity; rather, it is the daughters' surviving their mothers that precipitates the mothers' recuperation. The mothers' 'statues' are raised and set firm by their daughters, as it were, which signals the freedom of reclaiming a mother from oblivion, but also the mythic tendency of that reclamation. The fatal strategy is the daughter's, and not the mother's, to execute. Marina and Perdita become the metaphorical saviours of their mothers; after all it is the daughters' return to the fold – either Marina's meeting Pericles, or Perdita returning to Sicilia – that 'revives' their mothers in their own ways, for, as Davies puts it, 'The vision which is the play is not completed until mother and maiden, past and future, meet in indivisible concord.'⁵⁶ In thinking through what a writer like Boland must do in order to turn the mythic Mother Ireland to advantage in an age where symbols dominate, and where the mother is chief among them, the answer, perversely, has little to do with motherhood, and much to do with daughters; little to do with the past, and much to do with the future. This is why, in order to recuperate her grandmother, Boland's persona turns to her own daughters.

Daughters

Boland's poems assign great importance to daughters. In *Night Feed*, for example, the major theme concerns bringing up two daughters and, of course, feeding them at night. This is from the title poem:

This is dawn.
Believe me
This is your season, little daughter.
[...]
I crook the bottle.
How you suckle!
This is the best I can be,
Housewife
To this nursery[.]⁵⁷

Whilst 'dawn' is on the horizon for the daughter, it is sadly offset by the persona's static position as 'Housewife': *Bunreacht* is at work here for the mother, even if not for the daughter – the mythic statue stands still. Nevertheless, if the symbolic mother can be fully freed through the daughter, as in early modern England, then the daughter must be the focus here. In 'Fruit on a Straight-Sided Tray', from the same collection, she writes, 'you are my child and between us are // spaces. Distances. Growing to infinities'.⁵⁸ The enjambment leading up to the envoi graphically enacts the 'space' between the lyrics, representing the space between the persona and her daughter. Although this is a sundering of sorts, it results in the infinite, a limitless space of opportunity. The daughter, much as with Marina and Perdita, has the world at her fingertips, and is the vessel for the poetic strategy. Moreover, in 'Partings', a vision of daughterly liberation emerges: 'Your fingers fist in mine. / Outside the window / winter earth // discovers its horizon / as I cradle mine'.⁵⁹ This is a poem of pairings, with the persona declaring that 'we are one more and / inseparable again.' The

emphatically positioned ‘inseparable’ defies the line break that precedes it, instead focusing on the ‘again’ – a repetition, a second iteration. Although the poem is named ‘Partings’ it is also about unifications that make partings possible. The only two-lined verse – ‘discovers its horizon / as I cradle mine’ – pairs the horizon with the child in the persona’s arms. ‘Cradle’ and ‘discover’ reflect one another’s images of enclosure and opening. The idea of the horizon itself holds in tension between a limit and the marker of the rest of the world beyond. Here is the freedom of the daughter, despite, or at the cost of the mother’s constraints, and the image of fever that has otherwise plagued Boland’s mother figures is nowhere to be seen.

These ideas climax in ‘Legends’, from *In a Time of Violence* (1994). ‘Legends’ is dedicated to Boland’s daughter Eavan Frances, and commends the importance of legends in which the ‘teller can say *begin* and / *again* and astonish children’.⁶⁰ Most crucial, however, are the final stanzas:

Our children are our legends.
You are mine. You have my name.
My hair was once like yours.

And the world
is less bitter to me
because you will re-tell the story.⁶¹

The persona fully comprehends that it is in the daughter’s story-telling that liberation can take place for the mother. This poetic liberation, moreover, is visualised through the enjambment, overcoming the end-stop lines of the previous stanza – this is a corrective to the mythicization of someone like Shakespeare, whom, we recall, Boland’s speaker wanted to save from the idiomatic ‘Legend has it’. Moreover, another trajectory presents itself when a daughter tells a story of her mother to others. On such occasions the story moves from personal experience to public narrative; the future opens up precisely at the moment when

private anecdote is made public myth. Critically, it takes place in anachronistic time, when 'legends' take care of the future, rather than emerging from the past (certainly as 'The Comic Shakespeare' has it).

Thus it is not merely that the daughter has her own future available to her, but that the daughter makes the world 'less bitter *to me*', the mother. Above, the position of daughter was problematised insofar as the mother that she was due to become was seen as a chimeric symbol – unattainable and irreducibly public; by contrast, in this new formation the daughter in Boland's poetry makes the personal communal, and simultaneously makes the past a future possibility. This is in part because the story that she retells is neither the Mother Ireland myth, nor that of Cathleen ni Houlihan, but the story of her own, late mother. This pattern is that of the Elizabethan recuperated narrative of Anne Boleyn; it is the Jacobean re-establishment of Elizabeth I as the Virgin Mother or Britannia; it is also Perdita's restoration of her mother's past in *The Winter's Tale*. In this, mothers survive their daughters in legends – or in poetic words, they stand 'sentries between them and chaos'.⁶² Here Boland begins to employ the posthumous strategy evident in Elizabethan stories of Anne Boleyn, and Jacobean narratives of Elizabeth I, but added to the ideal of the 'complexly human' woman.

Perhaps this reaches a logical conclusion in 'An Elegy for my Mother in which She Scarcely Appears', from *Domestic Violence* (2007). It is a daughter's poem to her mother, but focuses for the most part on metonymic objects – things which intersect with her memory of her mother. Fogarty details how the mother 'is conjured up obliquely through the mute objects that act in the text as surrogates for her while also functioning as vehicles for memory and the poetic imagining'.⁶³ Through them, also, history is questioned, since when it comes to the 'brass firedogs which lay out / all evening on the grate and in the heat / thrown at them by the last of the peat fire / [...] no one noted down their history'.⁶⁴ The paradox of course is that the persona, in the act of lamenting the lost history, defiantly writes the history herself, an 'irony' that 'lies in the self-referential nature and determinism of the issue'.⁶⁵

Moreover, the next object that appears represents another defiant gesture – this time refuting the title of the poem itself:

as is my mother, on this Dublin evening of
fog crystals and frost as she reaches out to test
one corner of a cloth for dryness as the prewar
Irish twilight closes in and down on the room
and the curtains are drawn and here am I,
not even born and already a conservationist,
with nothing to assist me but the last
and most fabulous of beasts – language, language –
which knows, as I do, that it's too late
to record the loss of these things
but does so anyway,
and anxiously, in cases it shares their fate.⁶⁶

Many complex elements are apparent here. First, the defiant presence of the mother – albeit ‘phantasmal’⁶⁷ – reveals the potency of writing political absence, or failed (political) representation. ‘[L]anguage, language’ stands as part of that defiance, acting as a political slogan in favour of poetry, and a strategy to restore the mother to history. ‘Language’ defies the vacuousness of chaos, standing as sentry against its violence. The emphasis on ‘language, language’ may point to the presence of an additional Shakespearean allusion. They repeat, if ever so obliquely, Hamlet’s ‘words, words, words’ (II.ii.189). While the scene in which that quotation appears in the play may not be directly connected with Boland’s subject in this poem, the echo nonetheless points to the preoccupation with language of a play which is concerned from beginning (in old Hamlet’s injunction to his son to ‘remember me’ (I.v.91)) to end (in the form of Hamlet’s request of Horatio to bear witness to his story) with the

importance of the act of commemoration, with passing on stories down the generations so that history may remain a living thing.

Second is the idea that follows on from the versification of the history of the ‘brass dogs’: that writing about her mother is the daughter’s version of writing her mother’s history. In Boland’s prosaic terms, this is the daughter rendering the mother’s *past* usable and public. Finally there is the complex chronology, in which the poem records a past act of someone who is no longer living, through the voice of another who was not alive and able to observe the act in the first place. This impossible chronology takes the idea of the mother surviving through her daughter beyond the extreme – beyond the bounds of temporal possibility. It is an event that exists prior to memory, for which reason it is ‘anxiously’ recorded. And yet this survival, beyond the bounds of time – ‘o’erthrow[ing] law [...] and o’erwhelm[ing] custom’, as Time says in *The Winter’s Tale* (IV.i.8-9) – is precisely the logic of my argument: that mothers survive against the odds through their daughters’ public record. The mother is, fatally, absent; but strategically the daughter succeeds. By making the narrative public in poetry, Boland’s poems mythopoetically transform the mother figure into an artistic and political representative,⁶⁸ allowing her mother to weep ‘in time’ – that is, within the limits of temporality as opened up in poetry.⁶⁹

Just as ‘Fever’ shows how the grandmother’s private story survives in the granddaughter’s public narrative, ‘An Elegy for my Mother in which She Scarcely Appears’ is testament to the daughter’s ability to textualise and make public the private, interior mother-daughter relationship. This transforms ‘the indignity of [the grandmother’s] aftermath’ into a testament to her life.⁷⁰ The public myth of Mother Ireland is dismantled by adhering to its logic, and telling stories of women; however, the stories are not told by the women involved, but by their daughters. The fatality of the strategy is that the myths’ narrators and the mythologised women can never coincide. ‘An Elegy for My Mother’ is, after all, a textual celebration of a life already lived, emerging into poetry only after the elegiac subject’s death. Just as the posthumous enculturing brings Elizabeth I, Thaisa and Hermione back to life in both metaphorical and physical senses, so do Boland’s poetics restore a complexly human,

living memory to the stories told of her mother and grandmother. It is not merely that ‘The poet of women’s lost lives *feels* forever belated’ in Boland’s poetry, as Kiberd has recently observed,⁷¹ but that that belatedness is a necessary condition for the successful fatal strategy. Through this, their static statues are re-animated.

The final lines of both *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale* are telling in this regard. In the latter, Perdita says nothing to her mother, while Hermione speaks only four lines to her new-found daughter. The ultimate reconciliation between Hermione and Perdita, which acts as a cipher for Elizabeth’s renewed ‘meeting of minds’ with Anne Boleyn and her Protestantism, asserts the importance of the matrilineal line, and demonstrates the need for a princess such as Perdita to have her mother’s blessing for marriage more than her father’s:

PAULINA Please you to interpose, fair madam, kneel,

And pray your mother’s blessing.

Turn, good lady; our Perdita is found.

HERMIONE You gods, look down,

And from your sacred vials pour your graces

Upon my daughter’s head!

(V.iii.119-23)

Hermione’s reunification with Perdita is more important than Perdita’s with Leontes. In this the private precedes, or makes possible, the public, national narrative. At the end of *Pericles*, Thaisa’s introduction to her daughter Marina – simply: ‘My heart / Leaps to be gone into my mother’s bosom’ (V.iii.44-5) – is given fewer lines than Thaisa’s introduction to Pericles’ substitute in Tyre, Helicanus (V.iii.44-55), so that Helicanus and his name are afforded greater dramatic space – and more textual importance – than Marina and her name.

These examples would seem to contradict the ideas above that daughters recuperate mothers by re-telling their stories into the future. However, two ideas need to be borne in mind. First, Davies argues that Marina’s language is not to be overlooked:

The verb 'Leap', placed in the emphatic position on the line, evokes the usage of, for instance, the King James Bible, when it tells of Elisabeth that 'the babe leaped in her womb' (Luke 1:41) for joy. The commotion of the unborn child's body within the womb is interpreted by the enclosing mother as a statement of joy and as an intention to enter the future. *Marina's heart is a testament to the future and a token of the past.*⁷²

Thus Marina's language, despite its paucity, speaks not only of the future, but testifies to the past, her mother who brought her into the world. Thaisa becomes a 'usable past', in Boland's idiom, and gives access to the future.

Second, in both plays the postulated scene following the plays' endings – the unwritten scene, into which the characters enter following their last onstage exit – will include the weddings of Perdita to Florizell and Marina to Lysimachus. Pericles tells Thaisa that 'We'll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves / Will in that kingdom spend our following days; / Our son and daughter shall in Tyrus reign' (V.iii.81-3). It is apparent that the reunification of mother with daughter at the end of both plays is not the avowed aim of the play; rather the plays reunite mother with daughter in order to let the daughter have the time after or time beyond. This concurs with Boland's early thesis about Shakespeare's comedies, that the lack of weeping 'in time' brought about the comedies' marriages and 'happy endings', as it were. With their reunification, the mother's story ends and the daughter's story can begin. Thaisa's commitment is to her daughter, who will survive her and tell her story. Productions of Shakespeare's plays are in part the making public of these women's stories. The fatality of this strategy in Shakespeare's late plays is partly because the plays end: the reunification of mother with daughter is fatal to the play, albeit not to the characters. The fate of Perdita and Hermione, of Marina and Thaisa, is always to meet, and thereafter the play must finish. The plays are not as cut and dry as Boland's poetry, but the

meeting between mother and daughter is only seconds longer than the equivalent meeting in Boland's 'An Elegy for My Mother'.

Moving Statues

These theories are most dramatically in evidence when, in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare dramatizes the possibility of living on in a monument through the statue of Hermione, a strategy which repeats Elizabeth I's early strategy for immortality with Hermione. Notably, this is not Leontes' statue, but that of Paulina, the midwife and nurse, and therefore Paulina mothers into being an afterlife that celebrates the living, breathing mother while she was alive: 'Prepare / To see the life as lively mocked as ever / Still sleep mocked death.' (V.iii.21-3) The living-in-death statue refers to the past, but brings about the future marriage of Perdita and Florizell through the reunification of mother and daughter; and Perdita's presence, now that she is found, returns the statue to life. Hermione is Perdita's 'usable past', which returns Hermione to her and recuperates Hermione as a living mother. This statuesque strategy ironically situates *The Winter's Tale* and Elizabeth I as a usable past in the form of a strategy that Boland employs later.

Besides the strategy I have outlined, Boland clearly stakes her own interest in moving statues – albeit in a narrative parallel to that of Hermione's. In 'The Moving Statue', from *A Woman Without a Country*, Boland records the Balinspittle Phenomenon of 1985, when several people attested to seeing a statue of the Virgin Mary move. Critically, this story 'upstaged' that 'familiar news / of guns in moonless darkness / and snipers at dawn', with the theatrical metaphor central to the drama of the statue itself. However, unlike Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, the poem ends with 'No movement. Not a gesture'. Little is produced as a result of the moving statue, save the following: 'I took down my notebook – / *your eyes shall be opened* – / and left the page unwritten'.⁷³ This is to say that the story which upstages all else – which stands as sentry between citizens and atheistic chaos – produces poetry that ends in futurity ('*shall be opened*').⁷⁴ The moving statue produces poetic futurity.

Should the ornamental statue not be moved – should daughters not be allowed their future, should mothers not have their past celebrated – then the logic of a play like *Romeo and Juliet* returns. In that play, the Nurse is the preferred and more acutely humanist mother figure, while Lady Capulet is detached from her daughter's personal life. Indeed it is only at her daughter's faux suicide that Lady Capulet finally exhibits a (hyperbolic) emotional relation to her daughter: 'O me, O me! My child, my only life. / Revive, look up, or I will die with thee. / Help, help! Call help!' (IV.v.19-21) Ultimately, while Juliet's independence rules, her story is the one told by her surviving mother. There is no future in that relationship. Similarly, as in Boland's 'An Island of Daughters', also from *A Woman Without a Country*, should the daughter not re-tell her mother's story then the danger persists that it will 'Always' remain a 'dream' that women can 'un-stitch the gall-ink / and script / from great books', so that history can be 'stripped' back and the true past be spoken: 'the sadness, / the remembrance, the wretchedness of daughters'. These 'shadows / of women' exist 'in / the shadow of a nation'.⁷⁵ That is, woman's full liberation is positively correlated with that of the modern nation-state – Irish women and Ireland are tethered inextricably.

This dream can be realised through the stripping back of history and telling women's stories – by dismantling the myth of Mother Ireland from within through 'language, language', but not by rejecting the myth. More than that, woman's future is textually contained within the writing of the daughter about the mother. Biopolitically, woman's future is embodied within the daughter's body, but, it emerges, this is also true textually. Pericles' pronouncement to Marina that 'thou look'st / Like one I loved indeed' (V.i.115-16) is also saying that this daughter will in the future resemble the Thaisa of Acts 2 and 3. Or, in Boland's terms, 'the body of one woman is a prophecy of the body of the other'.⁷⁶

The last poem in Boland's latest collection was commissioned by the Folger Shakespeare Library for their winter 2012 exhibition celebrating women writers who were beginning to find publication simultaneously with Shakespeare. Not coincidentally, the project took place in the four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary year of Shakespeare's birth,

when many events were held worldwide to commemorate Shakespeare, thereby contributing to posthumous myth-making. Boland's contribution, 'Becoming Anne Bradstreet' invokes ideas of motherhood and childhood as the speaker's world is renewed by reading Bradstreet's poetry, and 'language makes time illusory'.⁷⁷ When the speaker reaches for a volume of Bradstreet's poetry, 'I turn the page. / My skies rise higher and hang younger stars.' The speaker finds 'Her child/her words are staring up at me', signalling that this poetic mother – at last a nameable muse mother – also forges a living future in Boland's poetry. After all, by the end 'The book lies open and I am again // An Irish poet watching an English woman / Become an American poet.'⁷⁸ Notwithstanding the biographical parallels between Bradstreet and Boland,⁷⁹ the key words here are 'again' and 'become': poetic motherhood and daughterhood are generative processes, even – or perhaps especially – when the mother figure is long dead. As Paulina commands in *The Winter's Tale*, time's passage is an opportunity to 'awake your faith' (V.iii.95) – a phrase not unlike Boland's '*your eyes shall be opened*'⁸⁰ – and to unfreeze motherhood, to let it be 'stone no more' (V.iii.99). To liberate motherhood as a daughter means moving the statue, to 'rework those images'.⁸¹

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- 1 Catriona Clutterbuck, 'Irish Critical Responses to Self-Representation in Eavan Boland, 1987-1995', *Colby Quarterly* 35.4 (1999), 275-91, p. 281.
 - 2 See Sabina Müller, 'Apple Blossom and Pomegranate: Eavan Boland's Mother-Daughter Story', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 122.1 (2004), 89-108, Molly O'Hagan Hardy, 'Symbolic Power: Mary Robinson's Presidency and Eavan Boland's Poetry', *New Hibernia Review* 12.3 (2008), 47-65, p. 51, and Jody Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014), *passim*.
 - 3 Clutterbuck, 'Irish Critical Responses', p. 277.
 - 4 Discussed in the 2017 John Coffin Memorial Lecture at the University of London, 28 June 2017, entitled 'Shifting Ground: Irish Poetry in a Time of Change' (q.v. <https://www.sas.ac.uk/videos-and-podcasts/culture-language-and-literature/shifting-ground-irish-poetry-time-change>). The phrase 'usable past' is not unique to Boland, and perhaps was most famously staked out by Van Wyck Brooks in 1918, when he was lamenting the inattention paid by local critics to the emerging North American canon of literature: 'If we need another past so badly, is it inconceivable that we might discover one, that we might even invent one? Discover, invent a usable past we certainly can [...]' Van Wyck Brooks, 'On Creating a Usable Past', *The Dial* 44 (1918), 337-41, p. 339.
 - 5 Eavan Boland, *New Collected Poems* (New York, NY: Norton, 2009), p. 18.
 - 6 See Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 40.
 - 7 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, pp. 18-19.
 - 8 Eavan Boland, *A Woman Without a Country* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2014), p. 29.
 - 9 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 180.
 - 10 Boland, *A Woman Without a Country*, p. 30.
 - 11 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 134.
 - 12 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 134.
 - 13 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 71.
 - 14 Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', *Signs* 7.1 (1981), 13-35, pp. 13, 32.
 - 15 Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Cape, 1995), p. 607.
 - 16 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction* [1976], trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 139.
 - 17 Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Mark Poster (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), pp. 198, 205.
 - 18 Anne Fogarty, "'The Influence of Absences': Eavan Boland and the Silenced History of Irish Women's Poetry", *Colby Quarterly* 35.4 (1999), 256-74, p. 271.

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- 19 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* [1957], trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, NY: Harcourt, 1959), *passim*, though esp. pp. 68 ff.
- 20 Patrick Crotty, 'Fathers and Sons', *New Welsh Review* 17 (1992), 12-23, p. 17.
- 21 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* [1916] (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 288.
- 22 Fogarty, "The Influence of Absences", p. 271.
- 23 Another exception is Andrea Bobotis' 'Rival Maternities' (2006) and, of course, Eavan Boland's writing, especially *Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time* [1995] (Manchester: Carcanet, 2006).
- 24 Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p. 395.
- 25 Richard Kearney, *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 210-11.
- 26 Pádraic H. Pearse, *Collected Works of Pádraic H. Pearse*, trans. Joseph Campbell, ed. P. Browne, 3rd edn (New York, NY: Frederick A. Stokes, 1917), p. 323.
- 27 Gerardine Meaney, *Sex and Nation: Women in Irish Culture and Politics*, LIP Pamphlet (Dublin: Attic Press, 1991).
- 28 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, pp. 128-9.
- 29 Fogarty, "The Influence of Absences", p. 270.
- 30 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 83.
- 31 Catriona Clutterbuck, "Mise Eire", Eavan Boland', *Irish University Review* 39.2 (2009), 289-300, p. 290.
- 32 John Goodby, *Irish Poetry since 1950: From Stillness into History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 232.
- 33 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 152.
- 34 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 84.
- 35 See 'Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland)', accessed 5 June 2013, at [http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/html%20files/Constitution%20of%20Ireland%20\(Eng\)Nov2004.htm](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/html%20files/Constitution%20of%20Ireland%20(Eng)Nov2004.htm). For a summary of the societal challenges facing women and, in particular, mothers, when Boland began writing, see Fogarty, "The Influence of Absences", pp. 264-5.
- 36 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol. One*, p. 144.
- 37 Edna O'Brien, *Mother Ireland* [1976] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), pp. 11, 86.
- 38 Andrea Bobotis, 'Rival Maternities: Maud Gonne, Queen Victoria, and the Reign of the Political Mother', *Victorian Studies* 49.1 (2006), 63-83, p. 64.
- 39 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 152.
- 40 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 75.
- 41 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 103.

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- 42 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 5.
- 43 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 174.
- 44 Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 246.
- 45 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [1983], rev. edn (London: Virago, 2006), p. 6.
- 46 See Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 47, 51.
- 47 Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 71.
- 48 Rachel Trubowitz, *Nation and Nurture in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 4-5.
- 49 John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 142.
- 50 In this vein, Richard Wilson comments that ‘with Protestant claims dependent on Anne’s exoneration, Shakespeare’s brief was surely to discredit such [Catholic] suspicion [of Anne].’ Wilson, *Will Power: Essays on Shakespearean Authority* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 171.
- 51 John N. King, ‘Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 43.1 (1990), 30-74, p. 36.
- 52 Howard also notes that ‘Images [of Elizabeth] were dispersed among loyal Irish chieftains and many were doubtless dutifully displayed. Ireland has the most accomplished contemporary rendition of Elizabeth in the medium of plaster in the overmantel of the gallery at Ormond Castle.’ Maurice Howard, ‘Elizabeth I: A Sense of Place in Stone, Print and Paint’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 261-8, pp. 264, 267.
- 53 Stevie Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed: The Idea of Woman in Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), p. 132.
- 54 Wilson, *Will Power*, p. 171.
- 55 Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed*, p. 134.
- 56 Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed*, p. 134.
- 57 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 92.
- 58 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 98.
- 59 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 96.
- 60 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 229.
- 61 Boland, *New Collected Poems*, p. 229.
- 62 Boland, ‘Shakespeare’, in *New Collected Poems*, p. 18.

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- 63 Anne Fogarty, “I Was A Voice”: Orality and Silence in the Poetry of Eavan Boland’, in *Irish Women Writers: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. Elke D’hoker, Raphael Ingelbien and Hedwig Schwall (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 7-23, p. 2.
- 64 Eavan Boland, *Domestic Violence* (London: Norton, 2007), p. 23.
- 65 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 170.
- 66 Boland, *Domestic Violence*, p. 23.
- 67 Fogarty, ‘Orality and Silence’, p. 21.
- 68 In Gayatri Spivak’s terms, both *Darstellung* and *Vertreten*. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), p. 108.
- 69 Boland elsewhere writes that ‘If a poet does not tell the truth about time, his or her work will not survive it. Past or present, there is a human dimension to time, human voices within it and human griefs ordained by it. Our present will become the past of other men and women. We depend on them to remember it with the complexity with which it was suffered.’ Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 153.
- 70 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 22.
- 71 Declan Kiberd, *After Ireland: Writing the Nation from Beckett to the Present* (London: Head of Zeus, 2017), p. 322 (emphasis added).
- 72 Davies, *The Feminine Reclaimed*, pp. 151-2 (emphasis added).
- 73 Boland, *A Woman Without a Country*, pp. 42-3. For more information on the Balinspittle Phenomenon, see Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2002), pp. 243-4; and the RTE Archive (<http://www.rte.ie/archives/2015/0730/718190-ballinspittle-moving-statue/>) for the original television report.
- 74 The Biblical reference for this is in the Old Testament: ‘For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil’ (Genesis 3:5).
- 75 Boland, *A Woman Without a Country*, p. 45.
- 76 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 206.
- 77 Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 182
- 78 Boland, *A Woman Without a Country*, p. 69.
- 79 Boland was born in Dublin, but since her father was a diplomat, she lived in London and New York in her youth. She is now Mabury Knapp Professor and Director of the Creative Writing Program at Stanford University, California. (On this point see Allen Randolph, *Eavan Boland*, p. 183.) Anne Bradstreet (1612/13-72) was an English-born poet who emigrated to New England in 1630. She published her first poems in 1650 and so she ‘may claim to be both the first female poet and the first colonial poet in English, and a radical

figure.' N. H. Keeble, 'Bradstreet [née Dudley], Anne', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2014), accessed 4 January 2018 <doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/3209>, para. 14.

80 Boland, *A Woman Without a Country*, p. 43.

81 Boland, *Object Lessons*, p. 148.